

When War was declared the national peril constrained all parties into a temporary truce, in which party ranks and party rancours were for the time being overlooked or ignored. But Conservatives could not forgive nor forget Churchill's desertion to their enemies, and his brisk and deadly firing into their ranks at a moment when their rout had begun. Had he remained a faithful son of the political household in which he was born and brought up, his share in the Dardanelles fiasco would have been passed over and another sacrifice would have been offered up to appease the popular anger. There was an abundant choice from which the altar could have been supplied. His mistakes gave resentful Tories an irresistible opportunity for punishing rank treason to their party, and the lash which drove Churchill out of office, although knotted with the insults he had hurled at them, was wielded with an appearance of being applied not by vindictive partisans but by dutiful patriots.

For days I discussed with one or other of my colleagues Churchill, his gifts, his shortcomings, his mistakes, especially the latter. Some of them were more excited about his appointment than about the War. It was a serious crisis. It was interesting to observe in a concentrated form every phase of the distrust and trepidation with which mediocrity views genius at close quarters. Unfortunately, genius always

provides its critics with material for
censure—it
always has and always will. Churchill is
certainly
no exception to this rule.

They admitted ~~he~~ ^{he} was a man of
dazzling talents,
that he possessed a forceful and a
fascinating
personality. They recognised his
courage and that
he was an indefatigable worker. But they
asked why,